

[View weather](#)

[View tide data](#)

- [Your Council](#)

- [News and Events](#)

The latest Council news and events

- [Meet the team](#)

Our staff and elected representatives

- [Meetings and Agendas](#)

Find out about upcoming meetings and read agendas

- [Community outcomes](#)

Social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing

- [Requests for Information](#)

How to request official information from the Council

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- [Local elections 2022](#)

Information on the upcoming local election

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- [Previous newsletters](#)

- [Our submissions](#)

- [Services](#)

- [Primary Services](#)

[Infrastructure](#) [Waste Management](#) [Pest Management](#) [Biodiversity](#) [Emergency Management](#) [Resource Management](#)

- [Community and Culture](#)

[Animal Control](#) [Cemeteries](#) [Library Services](#) [Gambling Venues Policy](#) [Historic Places](#) [Heartlands](#)

- [Rates, Consents and Licensing](#)

[Your Rates](#) [Building and Resource Consents](#) [Food and Alcohol Licensing](#) [Council Dues & Charges](#)

- [Coastal Services](#)

[Port Charges](#) [Navigation Safety](#) [Swing Moorings](#) [Marine Pests](#)

- [Environmental Data](#)

[Rainfall Data](#) [River Flow and Water Level Data](#) [Soil Temperature Data](#) [Tide Predictions](#) [Water Quality Data](#) [Wind Data](#)

- [Essential Freshwater package](#)

[What are the new regulations?](#) [Freshwater Farm Plans](#) [Wetland management](#) [Stock exclusion](#) [Fish passage](#)

- [Documents](#)

- [Annual Plan](#)

Sets out our work and priorities for the next financial year

- [Long-Term Plan](#)

Our work and priorities for the next decade

- [Annual Report](#)

An overview of the Council's activity

- [Resource Management Document](#)

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[View tide data](#)

Resource management framework summary

- [Regional Land Transport Programme](#)

Transport priorities for 2021 – 2031

- [Dog Control Policy & Bylaw](#)

Dog Control Bylaw overview

- [Vehicles on Beaches Bylaw](#)

Waitangi Beach vehicle bylaw

- [Rates Remission Policy on Māori & Moriori Freehold Land](#)

- [Navigation Safety Bylaws](#)

Managing boating and other activities on water

- [CDEM Group Plan](#)

Understanding hazards and risks to build capability

- [Investment Strategy](#)

A report on the Chatham Islands economy

- [Annual Plan](#)

Sets out our work and priorities for the next financial year

- [Search all Documents](#)

- [Contact](#)

- [View weather](#)

- [View tide data](#)

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◻ [Services](#) / [Essential Freshwater package](#) / [Freshwater Farm Plans](#)

- [What are the new regulations?](#)
- [Freshwater Farm Plans](#)
- [Wetland management](#)
- [Stock exclusion](#)
- [Fish passage](#)

Freshwater Farm Plans

Published 23 Feb 2024

As part of the Essential Freshwater package, farms over a certain size will require a certified Freshwater Farm Plan (FWFP).

All farms with the following land uses will require an FWFP:

- 20 hectares or more in arable or pastoral use
- Five hectares or more in horticultural use
- 20 hectares or more of combined use.

These regulations are expected to take effect in 2022, and a requirement for FWFPs to be certified will be phased in beginning mid-2022.

What is a Freshwater Farm Plan?

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[FWFPs\(external link\)](#) are a tool designed to stop further decline in freshwater quality, make water quality improvements within five years, and begin to reverse past damage to our waterways.

FWFPs will identify practical on-farm actions to help improve local waterways. These will depend on the farm's location, catchment, and local environment, and will provide a more flexible alternative to consents and one-size-fits-all approaches.

What will I need to include in my Freshwater Farm Plan?

Your FWFP will need to include information on:

- your catchment – including values, ecosystem and community outcomes
- risk identification and impact assessment – including the identification of critical source areas, plans for the management of fodder crops and wetlands
- actions to mitigate risks – including plans to strategically fence waterways, restore wetlands, and intensive winter grazing plans
- how you will meet the [National Environmental Standards for Freshwater\(external link\)](#) – including meeting the synthetic nitrogen cap, intensive winter grazing, stock holding and wetland rules
- how you will exclude stock from waterways and meet the new [stock exclusion regulations](#).

How will we implement Freshwater Farm Plans?

In 2020, the Government brought in legislation that requires regional councils to implement FWFPs. In 2021, it undertook a major consultation exercise to seek views on the details of how FWFPs should be implemented. The results of the consultation are now being evaluated and the detailed implementing rules and requirements for FWFPs are expected to be published in mid-2022.

Once these new rules and requirements for FWFPs are published, we will design and roll out a programme to implement FWFPs across the Chatham Islands.

We expect it will take several years to phase in FWFPs on all farms that need to have one, and we will be working closely with the farming industry to help farms navigate and implement the legal requirements of a FWFP.

Need help?

If you have any questions about the new Essential Freshwater regulations contact [03 3050 033](tel:033050033).

Need help? Get in touch

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[Community Outcomes](#)

[Requests for Information](#)

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[Community and Culture](#)

[Rates, Consents and Licensing](#)

[Coastal Services](#)

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